

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are now pending in the current application. In the Office Action dated June 5, 2001, the Examiner rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Joline, et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,005,696 ("Joline"). In addition, the Examiner objected to claims 2-9 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that claims 2-9 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Finally, the Examiner indicated allowance of claims 10-20.

Applicants' representative respectfully traverses the rejection of claim 1, for reasons detailed below. Applicants' representative therefore wishes to defer rewriting claims 2-9 in independent form until Applicants' representative's arguments are considered by the Examiner. Should Applicants' representative be unsuccessful in persuading the Examiner of the allowability of claim 1, Applicants' representative will rewrite claims 2-9 in independent form in a subsequent response. Applicants' representative wishes to thank the Examiner, on behalf of the Applicants, for the Examiner's contingent allowance of claims 2-9 and allowance of claims 10-20.

Claim 1 from the current application is provided, below, for convenient reference, with emphasis added:

1. A method for testing a *multi-device enclosure* that contains multiple devices, the method comprising:
 - controlling a number of bypass circuits to bypass a number of external communications medium connectors to *isolate* the multi-device enclosure from an external communications medium;
 - testing the multi-device enclosure*; and
 - when the multi-device enclosure passes the testing, controlling a number of bypass circuits to connect the number of external communications medium connectors to the external communications medium.

Note that the claimed method concerns testing a multi-device enclosure by controlling bypass circuits to isolate the multi-device enclosure from an external communications medium while the multi-device enclosure is tested.

Joline, as stated in the abstract, concerns:

[a] communications network having a plurality of distributed offices includes a test center at a central location *for testing line and/or trunk circuits* ('links') throughout the communication network. *The links are selectively coupled to a maintenance port of a selected office and are backhauled from the maintenance port to the test center via a shared network serving a plurality of offices of the communications network . . .* The test center includes or is in communication with a central controller and one or more associated maintenance and operation consoles (MOCs). *The central controller instructs a switch in the selected office to couple the link to be tested to the maintenance port where the shared backhaul network routes the circuit to a switch associated with the test center. The central controller also instructs the switch at the test center to selectively couple the link to a selected test device which initiates one or more tests and to report the test results to a MOC.* (emphasis added)

Thus, Joline is concerned with testing "line and/or trunk circuits" by selectively coupling maintenance ports at geographically distributed offices to a communications medium to which test devices are also interconnected via a test center so that the test devices can communicate through the communications media with the maintenance ports at the geographically distributed offices to access the "lines and/or trunk circuits" to be tested. A quick scan of Figure 2 in Joline indicates the geographical scale of the test environment diagramed in Figure 3.

While the present invention, as claimed in claim 1, is directed to testing a multi-device enclosure, a discrete electronic system such as a disk array or other multi-peripheral-device enclosure, Joline is concerned with testing large communications installations, such as routing offices interconnected by trunk circuits of a telephone system. While the present invention is directed to isolating a multi-device enclosure from an external communications medium, Joline is concerned with connecting an office through an external communications medium to test lines and trunk circuits also connected to the office. Careful

reading of the text of Joline describing Figure 3, starting at line 16 of column 7 and continuing through line 5 of column 11, demonstrates that Joline is directed to connecting lines and/or trunk circuits to be tested with test devices. For example, note the following passages from columns 7 and 8:

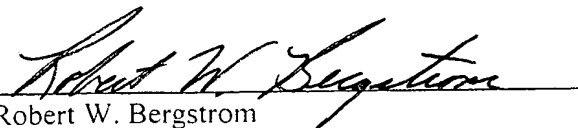
The digital switch 308 couples to the T1 channels on the ring via the add/drop multiplexer 307. The digital switch 308 at the central station selectively couples the T1 channels to individual test devices 309. The central test control 304 communicates with each digital switch 306, 308, with the add/drop multiplexers 302, 307 and with each of the test devices 309₁ to 309_n via an X.25 signaling network and/or a LAN, to set up connections and execute specific circuit tests.

The switch 308 selectively connects the T1 channels on the SONET ring 301, carrying the circuit(s) to be tested, to various ones of the test devices 309₁ to 309_n in response to the instructions from central test control 304.

Thus, Applicants' representative believes that Joline is directed not to testing multi-device enclosures, but is instead directed to testing communications facilities, trunk circuits, and other such geographically dispersed equipment. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, Joline is directed to interconnecting testing devices, a test center, and trunk lines or offices to be tested via an external communications medium, while the claimed invention is directed to *isolating* a multi-device enclosure from an external communications medium during testing. For these reasons, Applicants' representative believes that claim 1 is not anticipated by Joline.

All of the claims remaining in the application are now clearly allowable.
Favorable consideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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